XXV. *A Letter from* James Parſons, *M. D.* F. R. S. *to the* ROYAL SOCIETY, *giving a ſhort Account of his Book intituled*, A Mechanical Critical Inquiry into the Nature of *Hermaphrodites*. London, 1741. *in* 8vo.

GENTLEMEN,

AS the Compaſs of Nature is the utmoſt Boundary of any certain Knowledge we can arrive to in this Life, the Diſcovery of Truth by our Inquiries made into the Myſteries of Nature, muſt afford the greateſt Satisfaction.

Phyſical Knowledge ought much more to be the Subject of every one's Contemplation then, as yet, it ſeems to be; being moſt conducive to publick Welfare, and to furniſh the Minds of Men with the juſteſt Notions of the great AUTHOR of Nature: Elſe why do learned Societies ſo aſſiduouſly aſſemble? Why endeavour ſtill to add more Grains to their former Knowledge? but becauſe (alſo) the Study of Nature is the only pleaſing and ſmooth Field for the inquiſitive Soul to range in; a Field whoſe Objects are capable of being ſeized by our proper Senſes, and whoſe *Phænomena* may, by due Application, come within our Reaſon.

Such a Society then are the beſt Judges, and fitteſt Protectors, of every Eſſay oppoſed to vulgar Errors. Tis therefore I took the Liberty of dedicating this my Inquity into the Nature of *Hermaphrodites* to you, which the Preſident, Vice-Preſident, and others of

of you, were ſo kind to ſay, would not be unacceptable; eſpecially as it was wrote at a Time when the Town was daily entertained with Advertiſements of the *Angolan* that was ſhewed here publickly, and, thereby, was almoſt in general allured into the ſame Error that moſt of the Nations upon Earth had implicitly run after, from the Beginning of the World, concerning them; who were led into it by no leſs than the Writings of their moſt learned Men.

In order, Gentlemen, to give you, in ſome meaſure, a View of the Deſign of this little Book, I am to inform you, that the general Opinion of the World is, that there are *Hermaphrodites* in human Nature. In this Treatiſe I am to ſhew it cannot be; which I have endeavoured to do in the following Method, *viz.*

1. The Introduction, which is chiefly hiſtorical, lays down the Manner of this Error's being propagated amongſt *Jews*, *Pagans*, and *Chriſtians*, at all Times; with an Account of *Jewiſh*, Civil, and Canon Laws made againſt ſuch as were reputed *Hermaphrodites*, as well as thoſe that were always in Force at *Rome*, by which great Numbers of People were deſtroyed from time to time.

2. The Firſt Chapter exhibits many Reaſons againſt a Poſſibility of their Exiſtence in human Nature; with a true Diſcovery of ſuch Diſeaſes as have been the Cauſe of Men and Womens being called *Hermaphrodites*.

3. The Second Chapter is a critical Account of the Cauſes Authors have aſſigned for the Produce of *Hermaphrodites*; wherein it is proved, that no ſuch Effects could ariſe from thoſe Cauſes; and ſeveral

Abſurdities are expoſed in the Arguments advanced for the Support of this Error.

4. The Third Chapter is a critical View of the Hiſtories of *Hermaphrodites* given by ſeveral Authors; ſhewing that thoſe ſo reputed were either perfect Men or Women, having only ſome Deformity or Diſeaſe in the Parts of Generation.

5. The Concluſion deſcribes the State of all Female *Fœtuſes*, with ſome Obſervations which I laid before this moſt Honourable SOCIETY; which prove that every Female *Fœtus* may as well be thought an *Hermaphrodite*, as any that were ever called ſo.

By this Method I hope it will appear, that this ſo long reigning Error is confuted; and if this Learned SOCIETY, whoſe ſole Buſineſs here is to inſpect into the true Nature of Things, think I have ſucceeded, and give this Treatiſe, which I have the Honour to preſent them, a favourable Reception, it will be eſteemed a very great Honour by their

Moſt obedient Servant,

J. Parſons.

XXVI. *An Account of an* antient Date *in* Arabian Figures, *upon the North Front of the Pariſh Church of* Rumſey *in* Hampſhire. *By the Rev. Mr.* William Barlow.

AS the knowing how long the *Arabian* or *Indian* Figures have been uſed in the Weſt, may ſometimes be a means for diſtinguiſhing ſpurious from